

**Opening Statement
Chairman Mark Souder**

“National Parks of California”

**Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy,
and Human Resources
Committee on Government Reform**

November 28, 2005

Good morning, and thank you for joining us today. This is the sixth in a series of hearings focusing on the critical issues facing the National Park Service.

This hearing will focus on the Parks of California. California is the home of many of our nation's most famous parks. Yosemite, Golden Gate, Redwood, Death Valley are immediately recognized by Americans wherever they live.

The National Park Service is facing many challenges and problems. The units of California are no exception. Ever growing crowds at many of our most popular parks continue to put pressure on park resources. Golden Gate National Recreation Area is one of the most popular parks in the park system. As an unusual urban unit, Golden Gate and similar parks face some of the same problems as many other parks, but also unique challenges unlike any other. This hearing will examine how this park unit fits in to the system as a whole.

California is also the home of some federal and state park partnerships. Most notable are the partnership at Redwood National Park and the newest partnership at Angel Island Immigration Station. At Redwood NP, three California state parks and the National Park Service unit represent a cooperative management effort of the National Park Service and California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Angel Island opens a new chapter in state and federal partnerships. Although a California state park, new legislation, soon to be signed by President George Bush, would authorize federal funds for the restoration of the Angel Island Immigration. Through state and federal co-ordination, Angel Island, the ‘Ellis Island of the West,’ and an important site in American history, will help to complete the story of immigration to the United States.

On our first panel we welcome Brian O'Neill the General Superintendent of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. He will be testifying on behalf of the National Park Service. He will be joined during the question time by Don Neubacher the Superintendent of Point Reyes National Seashore, Bill Pierce the Superintendent of Redwood National Park, and Michael Tollefson the Superintendent of Yosemite National Park.

Our second panel will be Theodore Jackson the Deputy Director for Park Operations of the California State Parks, Gene Sykes representing the National Parks Conservation Association, Greg Moore of the Golden Gate Conservancy, and Daphne Kwok of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation. Welcome to all of you.